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State Agricultural Development Board Approves \$37,000 for Madison County Farmers Market Program

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board voted today to approve a \$37,000 grant request submitted by the Madison County Farm Bureau to further develop Madison County farmers markets and provide incentives for area farmers to get into fruit and vegetable production. The application was reviewed by the Madison County Agricultural Development Council and forwarded to the state board as a high priority item. Funds come from \$894,296 set aside for Madison County in the Agricultural Development Fund established with half of Kentucky's tobacco settlement proceeds.

The Madison County Farm Bureau will administer the program locally. The total budget for the program is \$71,000, and the funds awarded by the board will be applied toward advertising costs, merchandising equipment and expenses related to diversifying into horticulture crops. Governor Patton praised the Board's action to boost the efforts of farmers in Madison County to explore alternatives to replace lost tobacco income.

"This action means that Madison County farmers will be able to better market their horticulture products to an increasingly discriminating consumer market. This is an investment in an aggressive producers looking for income alternatives, in their agricultural diversification efforts, and in the future of agriculture in one of our state's most progressive agricultural counties," said Governor Paul Patton.

The award was made as one of 23 projects approved by the Board during its meeting today. The Board approved a total of \$593,423 in state level projects, and \$1,265,877 in a variety of county-level programs, including the Madison County Farmers Market Program.